

Sermon for Sunday, June 10 – Children’s Day

Genesis 9: 8-17

Romans 11: 25-36

Mark 14: 22-25

Ashley: Hi, Lauren. Hi, Danielle. What are the two of you looking for?

Danielle: Well, you know all of the rain and thunderstorms we’ve been having lately? I’m looking for a rainbow, to be sure that God remembers His promise to us to not flood the earth again, and Lauren is helping me.

Ashley: Well, that sounds kind of silly to ME. What about the covenantal promise that God made with Noah?

Danielle: Yeah, it’s BECAUSE of that covenantal promise that God made that we’re looking for that rainbow. We want to be sure that God still remembers that promise.

Ashley: You’re sounding sillier all the time. God would never forget a covenantal promise!

Lauren: What exactly IS a covenantal promise, anyway? We’ve talked about it in Sunday School, but I sort of forgot.

Danielle: You know, it’s like a pinky swear. Something like that.

Ashley: WHAT?! You’re comparing God’s covenant with a pinky swear?!

Danielle: Well, why not? When we make a promise with one another, we do a pinky swear, right?

Ashley: Jeeze, I can’t believe that you’re comparing God’s promises with a pinky swear!!

Danielle: It’s not really so strange. Paul writes in the letter to the Romans that *the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*.

Lauren: Irrevocable? What’s that?

Danielle: It means that God’s not an Indian giver. When God gives a gift it stays given. No take-backs.

Ashley: Jeeze, now you're talking about God and Indian giving in the same breath! What next?!

Danielle: Lighten up a little! We know that we can trust God. God loves us. God will never forsake us. God always remembers us, even when we sort of, kind of, well, maybe don't focus too much on God ourselves.

Lauren: You mean that sometimes people forget about GOD?!?

Danielle: Well, you know how it is. People get busy with stuff in their lives. Just think about how busy WE are: tae kwon do, lacrosse, gymnastics, singing and acting, homework,

Lauren: But not too much longer with the homework!

Ashley: Cheerleading, babysitting, gearing up for band and for high school....

Lauren: Sometimes we might sort of look like we have forgotten God. I guess.

Danielle: Yeah, you know how it is. And our parents get to drive us and our brothers and sisters around and work and cook and clean and all of THAT stuff.

Ashley: Yeah, and there's TV and vacations and going to the movies and sleeping and hanging out....

Lauren: Wait – are you SURE God doesn't lose track of us, too??!

Ashley: No, we already went over that. God remembers us, even when we get distracted. So you can forget about worrying about God sending another flood – the rainbow is God's way to reassure us. It's a promise, and not a threat.

Danielle: But a covenantal promise by God is more important than a pinky swear, or a spit shake. God doesn't have to make big promises to us, you know. After all, God is.... well, GOD.

Ashley: And yet the amazing thing is that God is willing to make huge promises to us, because we ARE His children. God loves us.

Lauren: If God loves us so much, how come I get into so much trouble sometimes? Doesn't God forgive us when we do dumb things?

Ashley: Well, yes, but maybe if you didn't make dumb CHOICES you wouldn't get into trouble at all! God forgives us, but there are still consequences to pay. But now those consequences aren't as bad as they were.

Danielle: Yeah, like if I'm playing catch with one of my cousins, and I throw the ball too high and it goes through a window instead of to him, the window breaks. My mom'll forgive me, but I may get into trouble for throwing the ball too close to the house, and even if I don't get yelled at too much, the window is still broken. So I have to do something to make up for doing something dumb in the first place.

Ashley: God really DOES love us a lot. In the Gospel of John, chapter 3:16 and 17 it says, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.*" God could have just left us alone, but instead He sent Jesus to us.

Lauren: So God's promises are really a sure thing?

Ashley: As sure as death and taxes!

Lauren: Taxes? Aren't we a little young for that??

Ashley: You know what I mean. We can depend on God at all times and all places. And God has given us things to help us remember that.

Lauren: Oh, yeah? Like what?

Danielle: Like baptism and like communion – remember all of that stuff we learned in our new member class?

Lauren: Oh, yeah, I remember. We get baptized to show that we are members of God's family, and when we take communion we remember the Last Supper, and all that Jesus did for us.

Danielle: Yeah, when Jesus was talking about His blood of the covenant, He was reminding them of how God saved the Chosen People during Passover, right before they left Egypt, remember? The Jews painted the blood from a lamb on the tops and sides of their doorways so the angel of death would pass over them. Jesus' blood marked the NEW covenant, so that the angel of death REALLY passes over us.

Lauren: Oh, yeah. That's why we have the baptismal font and the table up here, to remind us, right?

Ashley: Yeah, they remind us of God's love, just like rainbows remind us of God's love. And speaking of rainbows, are you done looking for one yet?

Lauren: Yeah. I guess I don't need to be reminded that God remembers us. I guess I should focus more on remembering God myself, and how much He loves us, and how much He expects us to act like His children.

Danielle: Well, we can start by inviting our friends to help out with vacation bible camp, and with the mission trip, and to come to church with us this summer.

Ashley: Yeah, that's a good place to start. Let's get moving!

Lauren: I guess from now on when I see a rainbow, I'll remember two things: how much God loves me, and how much I should love Him back!

Danielle and Ashley: Now THAT'S a good idea. Let's go!

Genesis 9: 8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for Me, I am establishing My covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish My covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember My covenant that is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Romans 11: 25-36

So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, *“Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; He will banish ungodliness from Jacob.” “And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”*

As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that He may be merciful to all.

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! *“For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to Him, to receive a gift in return?”* For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen.

Mark 14: 22-25

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it He broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is My body.” Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks He gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”